

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1. (Cancelled)

Claim 2. (Currently amended) A method as claimed in Claim [[1]] 23, wherein the articles are articles of food and the [[coating]] solidifiable liquid material is an edible coating material.

Claim 3. (Cancelled)

Claim 4. (Currently amended) A method as claimed in claim [[3]] 21, wherein the supply means includes a trough having opposed surfaces leading towards the slot, and a layer of gas is introduced between the [[coating]] solidifiable liquid material and each of the opposed surfaces.

Claim 5. (Currently amended) A method as claimed in claim [[3]] 21, wherein said at least one stream of gas under pressure is caused to become attached to the surface of the supply means so as to assist in establishing the layer of the gas between the surface and the [[coating]] solidifiable liquid material.

Claim 6. (Currently amended) A method as claimed in claim [[1]] 21, wherein at least one stream of gas under pressure is applied to the [[coating]] solidifiable liquid material after the curtain has been established in order to change the direction of the curtain and/or a physical property of the [[coating]] solidifiable liquid material forming the curtain.

Claim 7. (Currently amended) A method as claimed in claim 6, [[wherein said]] further comprising at least one further stream of gas is caused to flow over a curved surface adjacent to part of the curtain by virtue of the Coanda effect whereby a change in the direction of travel of the curtain is induced.

Claim 8. (Currently amended) A method as claimed in claim [[1]] 21, wherein more than one curtain of [[coating]] solidifiable liquid material is established to coat the articles, and the curtains are controlled simultaneously and/or independently.

Claim 9. (Currently amended) A method as claimed in claim [[1]] 23, wherein the pressure of the stream of gas is controlled to control the speed of descent of the curtain and the rate of relative movement between the articles and the curtain is controlled.

Claim 10. (Currently amended) A method as claimed in claim [[1]] 21, wherein the gas is air.

Claim 11. (Currently amended) A method as claimed in claim [[1]] 21, wherein the gas is at a temperature which is substantially the same as that of the solidifiable liquid [[coating]] material.

Claim 12. (Currently amended) A method as claimed in claim [[1]] 21, wherein the solidifiable liquid [[coating]] material is liquid chocolate.

Claim 13. (Cancelled)

Claim 14. (Cancelled)

Claim 15. (Currently amended) A method as claimed in claim [[14]] 21, further comprising [[the steps of]] depositing the modified curtain of solidifiable liquid [[composition]] material to form a layer in a mould or on a surface, and solidifying the [[deposited composition]] layer.

Claim 16. (Currently amended) A method as claimed in claim [14] 21, wherein the solidifiable liquid [[composition]] material is an edible composition.

Claim 17. (Cancelled)

Claim 18. (Currently amended) A method of coating an article with chocolate, comprising: releasing said chocolate from an opening in a supply container to form a curtain of said chocolate;

directing a pressurized gas at a surface of said chocolate to form a layer of gas between said surface and said supply container in a region proximate said opening; and

moving said article with respect to said curtain so as to coat said article with said chocolate, wherein said layer of gas [[reduced]] reduces friction between said chocolate and said supply container.

Claim 19. (Previously presented) The method as in claim 18, wherein said layer of gas reduces a viscosity of said chocolate at said opening so that a flow rate of said chocolate through said opening is increased.

Claim 20. (Previously presented) The method as in claim 18, further comprising controlling a temperature of said pressurized gas to be substantially the same as that of said chocolate.

Claim 21. (New) A method of producing a curtain of a solidifiable liquid material, comprising:

causing the solidifiable liquid material to flow along a surface of a supply means toward an outlet slot through which said liquid flows so as to provide a curtain of said solidifiable liquid material; and

subjecting the solidifiable liquid material to at least one stream of gas under pressure, said at least one stream of gas being introduced between the solidifiable liquid material and the surface to modify the characteristics of the curtain.

Claim 22. (New) A method as claimed in claim 21, wherein the solidifiable liquid material exhibits non-Newtonian behavior.

Claim 23. (New) A method of applying a coating to articles, comprising:

causing a solidifiable liquid material to flow along a surface of a supply means toward an outlet slot through which the solidifiable liquid material flows so as to provide a curtain of said solidifiable liquid material;

subjecting the solidifiable liquid material to at least one stream of gas under pressure, said at least one stream of gas being introduced between the solidifiable liquid material and the surface to modify the characteristics of the curtain;

effecting relative movement between articles to be coated and the curtain so as to coat the articles with the solidifiable liquid material; and

causing the solidifiable liquid material on the articles to solidify.

Claim 24. (New) A method as claimed in claim 23, wherein the solidifiable liquid material exhibits non-Newtonian behavior.